

Biden Takes Steps Toward \$15 Minimum Wage for Federal Workers

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President Joe Biden signed an executive order on Jan. 22 aiming to raise the minimum wage for federal workers. We've rounded up resources and articles from *SHRM Online* and other trusted outlets on the news.

Path to \$15 Minimum Wage

Under the executive order, agencies must identify federal workers who are earning less than \$15 an hour and make recommendations to help raise their wages. The executive order may also put federal agencies on a path to requiring contractors to pay a \$15 minimum wage—but the changes won't happen immediately. Biden directed the federal government "to start the work that would allow him to issue ... within the first 100 days" an order requiring federal contractors to pay at least \$15 per hour, according to the White House.

(ABC News (<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/biden-executive-order-takes-steps-require-federal-contractors/story?id=75414753>))

Prior Orders That Eased Federal Hiring and Firing Revoked

The order revoked three of former President Donald Trump's executive orders that made it easier to fire federal employees and limit union activity. Biden also eliminated a prior executive order that created a new job category, called Schedule F, for certain federal employees in confidential, policymaking and policy-advocating positions. Under the now-revoked order, federal agencies could decide which employees to put in this category, and those jobs would become "excepted services" roles, enabling agencies to expedite hiring and firing processes for those jobs rather than having to follow the traditional competitive hiring procedures.

(CNN (<https://www.cnn.com/2021/01/22/politics/executive-orders-biden-15-dollar-minimum-wage-federal-workers/index.html>)) and (*SHRM Online* (www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/pages/trump-proceeds-with-plan-to-ease-hiring-and-firing-for-federal-policy-roles.aspx))

Clarity on Jobless Benefits

Biden also plans to ask the U.S. Department of Labor to "consider clarifying that workers who refuse unsafe working conditions can still receive unemployment insurance," according to a White House factsheet.

(White House (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/01/22/fact-sheet-president-bidens-new-executive-actions-deliver-economic-relief-for-american-families-and-businesses-amid-the-covid-19-crises/>))

Increased Worker Safety During Pandemic

Biden issued an executive order Jan. 21 calling for increased protection of the safety and health of workers from COVID-19. The order requires the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to consider whether any emergency temporary standards on COVID-19, such as masks, are necessary.

(*SHRM Online* (www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/legal-and-compliance/employment-law/Pages/coronavirus-executive-order-increased-worker-safety.aspx))

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